

CONFIDENTIAL MEMO:

The following is a chronology of the intra-Administration meetings and discussions which ended with the President's speech of October 22, stating his conclusions as to Soviet missile armament of Cuba and the measures he had ordered to dismantle it.

August 10. After examining reports from the C.I.A. staff, Director McCone dictated a memorandum for the President expressing the belief that installations of offensive M.R.B.M. weapons, at least, were designed for Cuba by the U.S.S.R. His subordinates who prepared the "national estimates" papers of the Agency recommended that he omit a statement of this belief since he could not document it. He ordered that it remain.

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August 17. On the basis of additional material McCone stated this deduction, from at that time circumstantial evidence, at a high level meeting. Secretaries Rusk and McNamara expressed the view that the build-up was purely defensive, adhering to the prevailing Administration theory that the Kremlin would never take the risk of installing offensive weaponry, missiles in particular beyond the range of SAM -- surface to air.

August 22 and 23. McCone pressed his deduction in the presence of the President at one of these meetings. A few days later, after he left for Seattle for his wedding, he intensified his warning in code telegrams and on the scrambled telephone. On Aug. 30 he sailed with his bride for a honeymoon on the Riviera.

September 6. Lunching in Paris with Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric McCone continued to stress what was now becoming a firm conclusion.

September 7, 10, 13, 16 and 19. On the basis of C.I.A. and other intelligence reports forwarded to him from Washington, McCone recommended that

"national estimates" staff of the Agency make a firm statement of opinion that the SAM-sites discovered in Cuba were being developed for emplacements of surface-to-surface missiles with a 1,200 mile range and more, and that these missile parts and JL-28's were already being assembled on the island by the Russian "technicians." He also told his staff to re-iterate his recommendation, which McNamara had successfully opposed some weeks earlier, that low-level observation flights over Cuba be made to help verification of what the regular U-2 flights were photographing.

Lt. Gen. Carter, McCone's deputy, omitted from the C.I.A. memoranda for the President in this period the statements McCone recommended that the Agency include. His explanation is that, as charge d'affaires, and in possession of all the intelligence reports, and textually, it was his responsibility to decide whether or not to include these statements.

October 14 - 19. In the interim McCone had returned and pressed his views and conclusions at high-level meetings summoned by the President, and meanwhile SAC, over C.I.A. protests, had taken over the U-2's. Mr. Kennedy directed that the low-level reconnaissance flights be undertaken in scope to verify what photographs of U-2 flights had shown on October 14. Hurricane Ella's interference was a thing of the past; the pictures taken by the low-flying pilots Oct. 16 - 19 approximately proved conclusively the soundness of McCone's deduction that was first the source of his warnings and then of his firm estimate.

In a discussion of the Cuban problem this week the President remarked to McCone, "you were right all along." "But for the wrong reasons," said McNamara with a nod of assent from Rusk.

Arthur Krock

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*Arthur Krock*